

NEWS BRIEFING BY
ADMIRAL JAMES L. HOLLOWAY, III, USN (Ret.)
CHAIRMAN, SPECIAL OPERATIONS REVIEW GROUP
AT THE PENTAGON
SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 1980

Mr. Thomas B. Ross, ASD/PA: Ladies and gentlemen, I have a brief statement before I turn this over to Admiral Holloway. The statement is largely on behalf of the Joint Chiefs.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have noted that the Review Group faced a formidable task, especially in reaching judgments on issues involving tradeoffs, where there is room for honest disagreement amongst experienced professionals. They have commended the Review Group for its candor in expressing forthright judgments under the difficult circumstances of retrospective analysis in a short period of time.

The Chiefs also believe that the specific recommendations, as well as the broader principles and perspectives highlighted in the Report, will exert a constructive influence on future concepts and plans.

In addition, the Chiefs share the view of the Review Group about the competence of the Joint Task Force, that in the words of the report, those who planned and executed this operation were able and brave men.

The report offers two major recommendations: that the counter-terrorist forces of all our Military Services be brought under a single command; and that a senior oversight group be formed to review counter-terrorist plans and operations. With respect to the first, the Secretary of Defense has approved the establishment of a counter-terrorist Joint Task Force, which will bring the counter-terrorist forces of all our Military Services under a single command.

With respect to the second recommendation, the Joint Chiefs have designated a special operations oversight group to review counter-terrorist plans and operations. These organizational and advisory body initiatives are being pursued with high priority.

At this time, I would like to introduce Admiral James L. Holloway, U.S. Navy retired, a former member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Chairman of the Review Group. Admiral Holloway has agreed to make a statement and to accept your questions at the end of the statement.

Admiral Holloway: At the outset, I'd like to clarify the fact that the document that you received is not the verbatim report of the Special Operations Review Group. What you have is an unclassified version of a very highly classified report. Your version has been sanitized within the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

However, this unclassified version involved only deletions of classified material and occasional word changes necessary to retain continuity or preserve sensitive operational material. I would point out that the entire Executive Summary or conclusions, and recommendation sections of the original classified report remain virtually intact.

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